

Domestic Relations Committee
Judicial Conference of Indiana

Minutes
August 17, 2001

The Domestic Relations Committee of the Judicial Conference of Indiana met in Indianapolis, Indiana on Friday, August 17, 2001 from 10:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Indiana Judicial Center in Indianapolis.

1. Members present. Lorenzo Arredondo, Thomas J. Felts, E. Michael Hoff; Kathy R. Smith; Richard G. Striegel and Daniel F. Donahue, Chair.
2. Staff present. Jeffrey Bercovitz provided the committee with staff assistance.
3. Guests present. Andrew Cosby, PACE and Robert Monday, PACE; Judge Margaret Robb, Indiana Court of Appeals and Jack Stark, State Court Administrator's Office were also present.
4. Minutes approved. The minutes for the meeting of the committee on July 20, 2001 were approved.
5. Child Custody and Support Advisory Committee. Mr. Bercovitz distributed the notice of the first meeting of the Child Custody and Support Advisory Committee scheduled for August 31, 2001. They will discuss the Supreme Court Family Court Pilot Project and Parenting Time Guidelines. The members of the Domestic Relations Committee agreed to have Judge Hoff relay the recommendation of the committee that all statutory references to "visitation" in the present statutes be changed to "parenting time."
6. Supreme Court Family Court Pilot Project. Judge Robb gave a report on Phase I of the Supreme Court Family Court Pilot Project. She said Phase I focused on case coordination and mediation/facilitation in Johnson, Porter, and Monroe counties. Putnam County received Court Improvement Program (CIP) monies for a family case coordinator and case facilitation. She explained that Phase II of the project will fund the same counties at a reduced level, pay for Francie Hill's to remain as a consultant, and fund new projects including an examination of a multi-county approach for some families and two other projects. About \$200,000 is available for Phase II.
7. Mediation.
 - a. The committee members discussed facilitation as either a case coordination or a social work function; mediation on a judicial district basis; and use of Senior Judges as mediators and/or case coordinators.
 - b. Mr. Starke said there are about 80 certified Senior Judges in Indiana. He distributed a copy of Senior Judge statutes. About 55-60 Senior Judges work 30 days a year as a Senior Judge. About 4,500 Senior Judge days are budgeted each year at \$50.00 a day. Expenses for health and other benefits, mileage and hotel are also included in the budget. The committee discussed whether one mediation would equal one per diem, and the possibility of a certain number of family law mediations on a pro bono basis from newly certified mediators. They also discussed a district family law senior judge who would only perform a case facilitation and a mediation function on a judicial district basis.

c. The committee agreed to meet with the Senior Judge Committee at the September Conference, if the Senior Judge Committee agrees, and to listen to their thoughts on the use of Senior Judges as Family Law mediators. Mr. Stark agreed to contact Judge Kickbush about this meeting.

d. The committee discussed looking for private foundation monies to set up a trust fund to pay for family law mediators.

8. Next meeting dates. The members of the committee agreed to meet again from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on Wed., September 12, with the Senior Judge Committee at the Judicial Conference and again on Friday, October 19, 2001, Friday, January 18, February 15, March 15, April 19, May 17, July 19 and August 16, 2002 from 10:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Judicial Center

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Bercovitz, Director
Juvenile and Family Law